

Minutes Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Mike Shepherd (Chairman), Brian Anderson, Coral Shepherd, and Sarah Whitehead.

In attendance: Karen Orgill (Business Manager (BM)) Geraldine Scanlon (Assistant Business Manager (ABM) & Minute Taker) and Jo MacCallum (Responsible Finance Officer (RFO))

- 1 **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs Robert Frost and Dane Hipkin
- 2 **Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations by councillors in any agenda item** – None received.
- 3 **Public participation** - None received

Cllr M Shepherd sought confirmation from the BM that newly elected Cllr Whitehead could participate in the Committee meeting but was unable to vote on decisions as she had not formally been authorised by Full Council to become a member of the Finance Committee. The BM advised that was the correct process.

4 **Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting 11th December 2023**

a) To approve the Minutes

The minutes were approved as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

b) To review action list

The action list was reviewed with those completed removed.

c) To consider matters arising

Cllr M Shepherd advised that the BM is now on the Barclays mandate, however obtaining the bank card cannot be progressed until the relevant forms have been received from Barclays. The BM confirmed she had not received anything from Barclays to date.

5 **Current Financial Position**

a) IAC monthly report

Cllr M Shepherd said the IAC monthly and quarterly reports had been placed on SharePoint and reported the bank reconciliations for 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023 were all in order and all reports are arithmetically consistent.

b) Whole council budgets

Cllr M Shepherd advised that the reports for the whole council budgets had been placed on SharePoint and said the PC were on target to end the financial year within agreed budgets.

c) Aged debtors

Cllr M Shepherd stated the aged debt transaction 198 shown for the DVCA has now been paid.

Transaction 191 £2.15 is an underpayment owed by HM Customs & Excise. The RFO advised the latest VAT payment had been received and the outstanding amount was not included. After discussion regarding staff time etc trying to recoup the underpayment, it was approved for the amount to be written off.

d) Reserves

Cllr M Shepherd advised the Reserves report had been circulated via SharePoint.

6 2024/25 Budget Setting

Cllr M Shepherd stated he had placed all the budget setting reports and discussion papers on SharePoint. The Budget Comparison report differs from the one used for Agenda Item 5 as it shows a summary of the Draft 2024/25 budget in the last column. Once the budgets for 2024/25 had been discussed and agreed by the Committee it will be presented to Full Council for approval.

Cllr M Shepherd advised he had discussed, and agreed, with the RFO that it is appropriate to reduce code 1150 General Administration from £4500.00 to £0.00. this would not affect the precept calculation as the amount would have been a carry forward. Cllr M Shepherd proposed code 1150 General Administration be reduced to £0.00, Councillors discussed the proposal. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

Cllr M Shepherd advised Cllr C Shepherd had received a letter from the Church Warden requesting an increase of £500.00 to the Churchyard grant received from the PC. Cllr Anderson proposed code 2005 Churchyard Grant be increased from £5000.00 to £5500.00. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

Cllr C Shepherd stated she would contact the Church Warden to notify of him of the PC decision.

Cllr M Shepherd proposed the following:

As inflation costs are unpredictable, along with rising costs and contract renewals it would be advisable to keep sufficient funds in the General Funds therefore it is proposed this remains at £60,000.00 for 2024/25. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

The budget figures included carry-overs from the current financial year to 2024/25.

The proposed carry-overs are:

Council

1155 – QE2 Jubilee Hall Contingency fund £7000.00

Environment

4050 – Seat/Benches £200.00

Recreation

5065 – Recreation Ground 5 Year Plan £4100.00

In addition, there are three requests to carry forward unspent balances which are not currently shown in the draft budget. The estimated carry forwards for these codes are:

Council

1165 – Legal Fees/Land Registration £4,100.00

1170 – Service Improvements £3,600.00

Communications

6025 – Public Noticeboards £1,100.00

After discussion **it was resolved to recommend to Full Council that the 2024/25 budget be adopted as presented and that any remaining funds against codes 1065, 1170 and 6025 on 31/03/2024 be carried forward and the approved budget for 2024/25 be revised accordingly.**

7 Precept Setting

Cllr M Shepherd had circulated all relevant documents via SharePoint in relation to the proposed 2024/25 precept. Councillors discussed the funding elements, either to fully fund the budgets from the precept or to use accrued savings to reduce the precept.

It was resolved to recommend the following to Full Council.

**That the Parish Council funds the proposed 2024/25 budget directly from the Precept and agrees in principle to use accrued savings in the General Fund to top up the reserves as necessary, early in the new financial year.
The precept for 2024/25 be set at £175,000.00.**

8 IT Update

Cllr M Shepherd reported Cllr Sarah Whitehead can now access and use SharePoint. Cllr Mark Ward is set up on SharePoint however the issue of him accessing it using a laptop owned by his employer is ongoing. Cllr B Anderson had discussed the matter with Cllr Ward, informally, at the Environment meeting and it appears his employer is not happy to host the two systems on their laptop. Cllr B Anderson suggested the PC purchase an iPad which could then be loaned to Cllr Ward. The committee discussed options to enable Cllr Ward to access SharePoint. It was agreed for Cllr M Shepherd, in principle, to obtain prices for a new iPad.

Cllr M Shepherd advised an order has been placed with Parish Online for hosting the PC new website.

9 Business Manager Updates

(a) Monthly status check of Defibrillators

The BM advised she had carried out this month's checks, which included the defibrillator located at the sports ground.

(b) Risk Register

The BM said she is hopeful she will commence work on the Risk Register week commencing 22nd January 2024

(c) Contract Register

The BM said she is hopeful she will progress work on the Contract Register week commencing 22nd January 2024

10 Correspondence

Cllr M Shepherd advised he had received no correspondence.

The BM said, after she had updated the Grant Application form, she had reissued it to both the Dersingham Choir and West Norfolk Disability Information Service, King's Lynn however no response has been received to date.

11 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

None

12 Date of next meeting – Monday 12th February 2024, 7pm in the Loft

There were no updates requiring the meeting to be placed in closed session, so the meeting was closed at 7.50pm

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider passing the following resolution: "That by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

13 Leases Update

a) Sportsground

Cllr C Shepherd reported she had attended a meeting to discuss responsibilities for maintenance of the ditches around the sports ground. A revised plan will be sent to the PC for agreement and the draft leases can then be finalised.

b) Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Lease

The BM advised there is no update regarding the lease.

Action Points

Business Manger

- To review and update the Contracts Register as per the Internal Audit recommendations
- To review and update the Risk Register as per the Internal Audit recommendations
- To liaise with other parties as per minute 869(c) Supplier Due Diligence.

Cllr C Shepherd

- To contact a specialist roofing/safety company for advice and quotation for installation of safety roof anchorage points.
- To contact the Church Warden regarding the PC approval to increase their grant by £500.00

Cllr M Shepherd

- To collate reports on agreed budgets and precept for ratification at the Full Council meetings 22nd and 29th January 2023
- To obtain the cost of a new iPad