

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 9th June 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Mike Shepherd (Chairman) Nigel Barker, Coral Shepherd, Brett Thomas, and Sarah Whitehead.

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

- 1 To elect the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee and to receive the Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
Cllr B Thomas nominated Cllr M Shepherd. Cllr S Whitehead seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Cllr M Shepherd was duly elected as Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 2 To elect the Vice Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee and to receive the Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
Cllr B Thomas nominated Cllr S Whitehead. Cllr C Shepherd seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Cllr S Whitehead was duly elected as Vice Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 3 Apologies for absence – Karen Orgill**
- 4 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations by councillors in any agenda item – None received**
- 5 Public participation – None Present**
- 6 Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting 12th May 2025**
 - 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.
Cllr C Shepherd suggested she contacts a builder/contractor instead of a roof safety specialist regarding the safety anchorage points on the centres roof. Cllr B Thomas said he knew a contractor and would contact him to ask if he would be interested in doing a site visit.
The ABM said she had recorded the answer machine message and asked the IT team at ARK to carry out “setting” the message. Cllr M Shepherd said the message has been confirmed however it has now altered the length of time the phone rings before the answer machine connects has altered from 10 seconds to 12 rings. The ABM said she would contact ARK to reinstate the 10 second ring duration.
 - c) To consider matters arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 7 To review Committee Terms of Reference.**
Committee discussed the terms of reference, and the following was agreed:

Paragraph 2 – All semi-colons be removed and replaced with bullet points.

Paragraph 5 – All semi-colons to be removed and replaced with bullet points.

Paragraph 7 – To read:

At the first meeting after the Parish Council's Annual Meeting Committee should ensure a programme of meetings for all Committee's and Full Council meetings has been set for the Council year to end in May, taking advice from the Business Manager to avoid workload clashes with other scheduled meetings.

8 Use of Information Technology Policy.

Cllr M Shepherd said Norfolk PTS highlighted in their newsletter the need for an Information Technology Policy. The template provided by NPTS would need a lot of customisation to cover the Parish Councils needs as it only covers devices owned by the Parish Council and does not adequately cover councillors use of their own devices to access email and other cloud services.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should develop a formal Use of Information Technology Policy. The RFO agreed to make enquiries regarding the IT policies of other organisations she has dealings with to see if they have anything that fits more closely to our needs.

9 Current Financial Position

a) IAC monthly report

Cllr M Shepherd reported that his monthly IAC report had been shared via SharePoint prior to the meeting. He had confirmed that the bank reconciliations from 1st April to 31st May were all in order and the financial reports were numerically consistent. All payments had been processed and authorised in accordance with the financial regulations.

b) Whole council budgets

Cllr M Shepherd said all financial reports had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting and invited questions. Councillors had no questions.

Cllr C Shepherd asked if the money owed had been received from DRAX. The RFO said they have added a credit note to the account. Cllr M Shepherd asked if outstanding invoice had been paid. The RFO confirmed it had not been paid. Cllr M Shepherd advised as new direct debit request had been received by the BM from DRAX and asked if the new DD needed to be completed.

c) Aged debtors

The ABM reported the following:

Invoice 2364 the business manager had been contacted and confirmation had been received that payment has been made.

Invoice 2363 was not yet an aged debtor as the invoice was not 30 days old.

Invoice 2358 more attempts have been made to contact the company regarding payment however no response has been received.

Invoice 2350 more attempts have been made to contact the business owner and again no response has been received.

The ABM asked, as she has never been in this situation with businesses not paying their invoices, what is the procedure for non-payers and is there a process to follow and or standard letters that should be issued. Cllr N Barker asked if there was also a policy/procedure to write off unpaid debts. After discussion it was agreed that a new debt recovery policy is required as soon as possible and the RFO will produce and circulate a draft.

d) Reserves

Cllr M Shepherd said the reserves reports have been circulated via SharePoint and advised there were no issues regarding the Reserves. Cllr C Shepherd advised the expenditure had been agreed from the project reserve to pay for the work on the paving at the War Memorial which should be completed by the 15th August, VJ Day.

Cllr M Shepherd asked if the correct budget code had been used. The RFO confirmed it had, 9500 Project Reserves.

10 IT Update.

Cllr N Barker asked if there had been any issues with the recently installed broadband. Cllr M Shepherd said no problems had been reported. Neither staff or councillors present had any issues to report.

11 2024/25 Internal Audit.

Cllr M Shepherd said he had placed the draft report received on SharePoint and said he had been asked to sign off the report by the Internal Auditor however he had found a few minor corrections that needed to be made.

Page 4 - Bank Reconciliations. This should read that the IAC prepares monthly and quarterly reports.

Page 6 – Ledger Access and Control. This should read The RFO and ABM have full access to the accounting software, with the IAC having read only access.

Cllr M Shepherd proposed he signs off the report on behalf of the council once the amendments had been made. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

12 2024/25 Draft AGAR.

Cllr C Shepherd gave a brief outline to the AGAR procedure for the benefit of new Councillors on the committee. The AGAR form will be presented to Full Council for formal approval on 23rd June. The Parish Council Chairman will sign the form ready for submission. Once completed the form will be displayed publicly both on the website and the local noticeboards.

13 Committee Spending Plans 2025-26

Cllr C Shepherd said it had been agreed by the Communications Committee to request funding to purchase a large noticeboard to be located at the village centre.

Environment Committee have asked that the BM obtain a quote from the street light contractor to carry out an internal survey of the steel columns to ascertain if any rust is present.

A survey of the dog bins is to be done to establish if any need replacing or can be decommissioned.

The Parish Council manage a small piece of land on James Jackson Road and the Environment Committee will review the current management regime.

Cllr B Thomas said the Business Manager had tried to obtain three quotes for the neighbourhood plan however, only 1 quote had been received. 1 company had declined quoting due to high levels of work currently and the other had not responded. After discussion the planning committee agreed to propose to the F&A Committee that the quotation received be agreed, and the Planning Committee requests the quote be approved by Full Council to enable work to commence on the Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that the quotation received be presented to Full Council for approval.

14 Update on Dersingham Parish Council’s Insurance

Cllr M Shepherd said the BM had placed an update on SharePoint however he expressed concerns the deadline date used for the quotes to be received left insufficient time for councillors to review the quotes before a decision was needed at the next Finance Committee meeting. He suggested asking the BM to bring the deadline date forward. He also asked if the same quote specification had been submitted to our current insurance company. The ABM said she would discuss it with the BM when she was back in the office.

15 DVCA’s Running Costs

Cllr M Shepherd explained the Parish Council should pay 6.61% of the running costs to DVCA every six months. We have now received the claim covering the period from October 2024 to April 2025. The claim is nearly twice what it was this time last year but is mostly due to increases in wages, electricity and sewage treatment plant repair costs. After discussion **It was resolved to invite DVCA to submit their invoice.**

16 Age UK Norfolk Grant Request.

Cllr M Shepherd said the BM had contacted Age UK regarding more information regarding their grant application. The application was discussed, and Cllr B Thomas proposed a one-off grant be given to Age UK for £100.00. **It was resolved to approve the proposal**

17 Business Managers Update

17.1 Defibrillator Checks

The ABM reported the BM had carried out her monthly checks and Circuit and SharePoint had been updated.

17.2 New Costings for DVCA photocopying

The BM had circulated the new costings for DVCA photocopying recharge from June 2025. The following prices were agreed.

- A4 Black £0.02
- A4 Colour £0.07
- A3 Black £0.04
- A3 Colour £0.09

18 Correspondence

None received

19 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

Insurance Renewal

20 Date of next meeting – Monday 14th July 2025 at 7pm in the Loft

The meeting was placed in closed session at 8.50pm

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.

21 Leases Update

a) Sportsground

Cllr C Shepherd advised the lease had been agreed and a copy will be signed once received from our solicitor.

(b) Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hall

Cllr C Shepherd advised the social club are waiting to hear from their solicitors.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 8.55pm

Action Points

Cllr M Shepherd

Cllr C Shepherd

- To contact a builder/contractor for advice and quotation for installation of safety roof anchorage points.

RFO

- To review auditors and accountants for future Internal Audits.
- To review other Parish Councils Information Technology policies.
- To send the ABM copies of procedural guidance and policies regarding unpaid invoices.
- To arrange payment of the approved £100.00 grant to Age UK.

Business Manager

Assistant Business Manager

- To contact ARK to have the 10 second ring reinstalled on the phone system.
- To speak with the BM regarding the deadline dates for the quotes on the insurance renewal.