

Proper Officer/RFO: Mrs Pauline Collins

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Minutes of Finance and Administration Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd January 2024

Present: Councillors – Ms I Horsley (Chair), Miss C Sharpe, Ms L Cooke, Mr G Smith and Mr R Fellows- Turnbull
Proper Officer/RFO - Mrs P Collins

24001 Apologies for absence (including resolutions to accept reason for absence by Councillors)
Apologies received from Cllr D Greenup
Resolved to accept their apologies and reasons for absence.

24002 Code of Conduct and Disclosure of Interests
None

24003 Public questions in respect of items on the agenda
Questions were raised in respect of agenda items 6, 8 and 9.

Standing orders were suspended.

Discussions were held with the members of the Public in respect of these questions.

Suspended orders were reinstated.

24004 Minutes of meeting held on 5th December 2023
The minutes having been distributed prior to the meeting and made available to the Public at the meeting. Cllr Cooke requested an addition to minute no 23096 in respect of the Unity Trust bank account. Minutes were amended in ink by the Chair.
Resolved to approve and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24005 Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda
a) Unity Trust bank account has been opened and councillors received login letter. Paying-in book pending.
b) CCTV – a local resident has dealt with the power issue and may have a solution.
c) VAT – the Proper Officer has consulted with the internal auditor in respect of VAT and budget setting. VAT should not be included for either income or expenditure within budget setting figures.

24006 To discuss and review the current year's budget
The current budget figures had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Proper Officer reported on the budget, expenditure and income to date.

Standing orders were suspended

Public questions were answered in respect of DISH and Christmas Cracker event – income and attendance figures.

Suspended orders were reinstated.

The Proper Officer was requested to contact the Village Hall Committee re a signing in policy for users

24007 To discuss and consider the allocation of earmarked reserves
The current EMR were reviewed and no changes were required.

24008 To discuss initial preparation of 2024/25 budget

Councillors reviewed the draft budget. The following changes were requested to the proposed budget:

INCOME

Bank Interest – increase to £1800 (to include future interest from Unity Trust Bank)

EXPENDITURE

Insurance reduce to £850

Hall Hire reduce to £900

Website reduce to £250

Knowle Wood increase to £3000

Caretaker Contract reduce to £1800

Generator costs maintain at £12000

DISH Hall Hire increase to £2300

The Proper Officer to recalculate the proposed budget and circulate to Councillors.

Standing orders were suspended

Public questions were answered in respect Facts and Finance event, recent village survey and the inclusion of any proposal made by the Public in the 2024/25 budget

Suspended orders were reinstated.

24009 To note the following acceptable objections received by the external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP to 2022/23 AGAR

- a) Objection 2: “You object to the management of funds and investments including NS&I and NatWest accounts.”
- b) Objection 4: “You object to expenditure during the year on staff costs compared to the prior year and the Council’s failure to carry out a benchmarking exercise in respect of this cost.”

The Parish Council noted and accepted the two objections received by the external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP to the 2022/23 AGAR. Initially seven objections had been lodged, however the external auditor determined only two required investigating. The response to these objections will be dealt with under agenda item 11

24010 Future agenda items

Budget 2024/25 and precept

Standing Orders document

Action Plan

Emergency Plan

CCTV

Standing orders were suspended

A member of the Public also suggested items –

- a) Length of minutes and what should be included.
- b) Bank account monitoring of balances and interest rates

For inclusion in future agenda items at the discretion of the Proper Officer and Chair

Suspended orders were reinstated.

24011 Confidential Items

- (a) To resolve that pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following matters.

Resolved to discuss and consider objection 2 in Public and objection 4 as a confidential item

- (b) To discuss and consider a response the following acceptable objections received by the external auditor to 2022/23 AGAR

Objection 2: “You object to the management of funds and investments including NS&I and NatWest accounts.”

Councillors discussed the £85K FSCS protection, bank account levels, previous Committee and Full Council meeting minutes and actions being taken moving forward.

Members of the Public left the hall and Parish Councillors continued in a close session.

Objection 4: “You object to expenditure during the year on staff costs compared to the prior year and the Council’s failure to carry out a benchmarking exercise in respect of this cost.”

Councillors discussed items relating to this objection

- (c) To delegate the compilation of these responses and a report for the Full Parish Council to Cllrs Horsley, Sharpe and the Proper Officer. (It is proposed the final decision on this matter will be made by the Full Parish Council meeting on 23rd January 2024)

Resolved for Cllrs Horsley, Sharpe and the Proper Officer to compile a report for discussion and approval at future Parish Council meetings.

Resolved to write to PKF Littlejohn LLP for a short extension after 28th February 2024 deadline to allow the completion, if necessary, of the final report after the Parish Council meeting on 27th February 2024.

24012 Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

24013 Date of next meeting

Next meeting to be held on 6th February 2024 (subject to review)

Signed _____
(Chair)

Dated _____

Draft until agreed and signed at the next meeting