

Minutes Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 9th September 2024 at 7.00pm.

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

In attendance: Karen Orgill (Business Manager (BM))
Geraldine Scanlon (Assistant Business Manager (ABM) & Minute Taker).
Jo MacCallum (Responsible Finance Officer (RFO))
1 Member of the public

- 1 Apologies for absence** – Cllrs Robert Frost and Brett Thomas.
- 2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations by councillors in any agenda item** – None received

The meeting was placed in open session at 7.04pm

- 3 Public participation**
The parishioner present introduced himself and explained he had been attending various Parish Council (PC) meeting to get an insight into becoming a Councillor.

The meeting was placed in closed session at 7.07pm

Cllr Whitehead asked if there was an update regarding recruitment of the school crossing patrol vacancy. Cllr C Shepherd explained there had been three applicants when the role was first advertised, one candidate was interviewed however did not get the position, therefore as far as we know the post remains vacant. No update has been received from the County Council.

- 4 Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting 15th July 2024**
 - 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 asked, as per minute 4c, if the BM had contacted Task Force regarding the approved grant from the PC. The BM explained she had spoken to the Task Force representative who had said they did not want to plant throughout summer so would purchase the plants later in the year.
Cllr M Shepherd asked, as per minute 4c, if there had been a response from Norfolk County Council (NCC) regarding the PC request to have additional roads added to the gritting route. The BM reported that NCC had said they would review the routes in 2025, however if the request for an additional route is agreed another route would have to be removed.

5 Current Financial Position

a) IAC monthly report

Cllr M Shepherd reported the overall bank reconciliations for 1st April 2024-31st August 2024 were all in order and the financial reports were numerically consistent. All payments had been processed and authorised in accordance with the financial regulations. The next VAT return is due for submission in October.

b) Whole council budgets

Cllr M Shepherd said all financial reports for July and August had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting and invited questions. There were no questions raised regarding the reports.

c) Aged debtors

The ABM advised she had spoken to the gentleman regarding the outstanding invoice. He said he had not received his invoice and would bring a cheque to the office. Cllr M Shepherd said that if he does not pay, the ABM advise the RFO for her to chase.

d) Reserves

Cllr M Shepherd said the reserves reports have been circulated via SharePoint and invited questions. There were no questions raised.

6 IT Update

Cllr M Shepherd said the order had been placed with LightSpeed for both the PC and DVCA. Installation for both will be done at the same time however a date is still to be confirmed. He advised that the LightSpeed and BT broadband services would have to be run in parallel for a time, which may result as overspend on the Telephones/broadband budget. We can cover any shortfall elsewhere within the committees budgets.

Cllr M Shepherd told the committee the refurbishment of the stand-alone PC may not be a good option as Windows 10 will soon be de-supported by Microsoft. He suggested it may better to purchase a further low specification Windows 11 laptop to use as a staff back up.

7 Staff and Councillor ID Badges

Cllr C Shepherd advised that the DVCA wish to tighten security both for staff and the building and have suggested that Councillors and Staff wear an ID badge when in the building. Cllr M Shepherd suggested the photos used on the new website could be used for the ID badges. The BM said she was able to create the ID badges and would make some for Councillors approval.

8 Financial Regulations (FR) and Standing Orders (SO) update

Cllr M Shepherd said he had reviewed both the FR and SO and made suggested changes to both documents which he had circulated via SharePoint. Each suggested change to the FR was discussed and all were agreed, except for the change to 15.3. The RFO suggested the sentence "The use of the new supplier must be approved by the RFO before quotes are presented to councillors for approval" be altered as it gives the impression that the RFO is involved in obtaining and agreeing the quotation process however the RFO only knows supplier details once councillors have agreed on a quote and an order has been raised by the BM. After discussion its was agreed Cllr M Shepherd would reword the sentence and circulate it to the Committee. Once the amendment is agreed the updated FR will be presented to Full Council for adoption.

The suggested changes to the SO were discussed and each one agreed by the Committee. It was agreed the updated SO will be presented to Full Council for adoption.

9 Supplier Due Diligence

Cllr M Shepherd advised the BM and RFO had produced two forms one for New Suppliers and the other for the amendment to current supplier's details. Committee discussed if it was necessary to include a tick box to indicate if IR35 was present. It was agreed for the BM to place an IR35 tick box on the forms. Cllr M Shepherd said there needed to be a procedure policy written to accompany the forms and suggested Cllr Whitehead and the RFO to liaise and draft a policy. Cllr M Shepherd said the completed forms would be stored electronically on SharePoint, with a library of contractors/suppliers. The BM asked, as the completed documents would hold personal data, would access be limited to the files on SharePoint. It was decided a private library would be created with only staff and Cllrs M and C Shepherd having access.

10 Asset Insurance Valuation Review

Cllr M Shepherd said he felt that there would have to be professional valuations carried out on certain PC assets, such as the War Memorial, Village Centre, and QE II Jubilee Hall. Cllr M Shepherd suggested that he would discuss the asset valuation review with the RFO to ascertain what needs to be done. Cllr M Shepherd asked the BM to consider how she will maintain the asset register once it is updated, the recording of new assets, removed assets etc. The BM said she would add a tick box to the order to indicate the asset register could be updated by the RFO once the work is completed.

11 Correspondence

Cllr C Shepherd said the Borough Council had sent information through for a Tax Base Training course to be held Tuesday 19th and Thursday 21st November 2024. The BM and RFO agreed to attend the training course on the 21st November.

12 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

Contracts Register.
Business Manager Update.

The BM asked if there would be limited access to the Contracts Register on SharePoint. It was agreed a private library would be created with only staff and Cllrs M and C Shepherd having access.

13 Date of next meeting – Monday 14th October 2024, 7pm in the Loft

The meeting was placed in closed session at 8.55pm

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.

14 Leases Update

a) Sportsground

Cllr C Shepherd reported the Sportsground Association had agreed to sign the lease.

(b) Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hall

Cllr C Shepherd advised the PC solicitors had contacted the solicitor representing the social Club but had received no update to date.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 9.20pm

Action Points

Cllr M Shepherd

- To test the ABM standalone PC to establish if it can be used as backup by staff.
- To review the Contracts Register and give feedback to the BM.
- To present the updated Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to Full Council for adoption.
- To liaise with the RFO regarding the asset insurance valuation renewal.

Cllr C Shepherd

- To contact a specialist roofing/safety company for advice and quotation for installation of safety roof anchorage points.

Business Manager

- To review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset Register for insurance renewal purposes in 2025
- To add a IR35 tick box to the Supplier Due Diligence form.
- To produce ID badges for Councillors approval.
- To book BM and RFO on the Borough Council Tax Base training course 21st November 2024.

RFO

- To review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset Register for insurance renewal purposes in 2025
- To liaise with Cllr Whitehead regarding the Supplier Due Diligence process policy.