

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

Present: Cllrs Coral Shepherd, Brett Thomas, and Sarah Whitehead.

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

In the absence of the Chairman it was approved for Cllr C Shepherd to chair the meeting.

- 1 Apologies for absence –** Cllrs Robert Frost and Mike Shepherd.
- 2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations by councillors in any agenda item –** None received
- 3 Public participation –** None present
- 4 Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting 11th November 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**
There were no matters arising.
- 5 Current Financial Position**
 - a) IAC monthly report**
Cllr C Shepherd reported that Cllr M Shepherd had advised that his monthly report had been shared via SharePoint prior to the meeting. He had confirmed that bank reconciliations for 1st April 2024-30th November 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.
 - b) Whole council budgets**
Cllr C Shepherd said all financial reports for November had been placed on SharePoint prior to the meeting and invited questions. There were no questions raised regarding the reports.
 - c) Aged debtors**
Cllr C Shepherd advised there are currently no Aged Debtors.
 - d) Reserves**
Cllr C Shepherd said the reserves reports have been circulated via SharePoint and advised there were no issues regarding the Reserves.
Cllr C Shepherd said there has been no money spent from the project reserves to date however the environment committee have two projects they wish to proceed with in the new year.

6 2025/26 Budget Setting

The Finance Committee budgets had not been completed at the previous meeting as further information was required, see updates:

Council Expenditure

1015 Insurance – Cllr C Shepherd advised the valuations for the DVCA and QE II Jubilee Hall have been carried out however the costings of the valuations are yet to be received.

1025 Subscriptions Increase to £1,800.00

Cllr C Shepherd said the BM had contacted NALC and had been advised, based on this year's figures, the subscription would be £982 for the year. Therefore, it was agreed to add £1,000.00 to the subscription budget.

1035 Office Rent/Maintenance

Cllr C Shepherd had contacted both the treasurer and the Chairman of the DVCA to request an invoice for the Parish Councils part of the DVCA running costs, however no invoice had been received to date. It was agreed last year's figures would be reviewed and a small percentage added to establish a figure for 2025-2026 budget.

1045 Telephones/Broadband Increase to £1,000.00

Cllr C Shepherd said the contract with BT had been cancelled and the final invoice has been received, however no invoice from Lightspeed has been received to date. The RFO advised she had received an invoice from ARK ICT Solutions Ltd for the usage of the new VOIP telephone system however no invoice has been received for the handsets and router.

1065 Legal Fees/Land Registration Set as £2,500.00

Legal fees had been established for the leases currently being processed. The Social Club lease has a fixed price of £1,200.00 and the sports ground is estimated to be £1,300.00. It was agreed to set the budget at £2,500.00 for 2025-2026 and request a flexible carry over as a contingency.

1130 Software/Subs/Licencing/Maintenance Increase to £3,000.00

The RFO had suggested to allow £900.00 for the EDGE IT contract increase for 2025-2026 and it was agreed to add a small contingency for any unexpected price increases to the Microsoft licences.

1140 IT Support/Maintenance Remain at £2,500.00

It was agreed to leave the budget at £2,500.00 as last year and carry forward any unspent balance.

1145 New Replacement IT Hardware Remain at £2,000.00

It was agreed to leave the budget at £2,000.00 for purchasing new or replacement devices for either councillors or staff.

1170 Service Improvements Budget set as £3,500.00

Cllr C Shepherd said, with the Government considering hybrid meetings for parish councils, a meeting owl 3 has been costed at £900.00 and for the purchase and installation of two screens for the garden room and the loft an estimated £2,000.00. This will enable Councillors to attend the meetings remotely via Teams.

A request has been made by Cllr J Houston to have a sound system installed in the garden room as he struggles to hear at meetings. The BM had responded by asking the type of sound system he proposed being installed, there has been no response so far from Cllr Houston.

7 IT Update

Cllr C Shepherd reported the following:

The VOIP system is now live, and the BT contract has been terminated.

The first monthly invoice has been received from ARK ICT Solutions and will be added to the payment's approval list at the next full council meeting. Cllr C Shepherd proposed the ARK monthly payment be added to the monthly Direct Debit payment list. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

The switch from our corporate identity emails from dersingham.org.uk to dersingham-pc.gov.uk is yet to be completed.

8 Update on New savings Account

The RFO reported she had looked at various building society accounts for the reserves money, but the options are limited for Local Authorities with dual authorisation on accounts. One option is investing in a deposit fund with the CCLA who offer average rates around 5%. The Unity Trust Bank offer various accounts with interest rates up to 4.6%. Unity Trust do require a free current account to be opened first, this can be done with a nominal amount and then a savings account can be opened. The committee discussed the various options, and favoured Unity Bank. It was agreed that Cllr M Shepherd and the RFO would discuss the options and it be reviewed at the next F&A committee meeting.

9 Update Asset Insurance Valuation Review

Cllr C Shepherd said there is no update until the valuation on the DVCA and QE II Jubilee Hall has been received.

10 Business Managers Update

a) Defibrillator Checks

The BM advised she had carried out the monthly defib checks and the form has been placed on SharePoint. The Defib located at the QE II Jubilee Hall has been sent to America for repair and a loan unit is now in place and registered with circuit. There has been no update as to when our defib will be returned.

The battery on the defib located at the Spar shop is now only showing two lines whereas previously three were displayed. The BM felt the battery may need replacing in 12-18 months' time.

b) DVCA Photocopying Recharge.

The BM said she had invoiced the DVCA for the photocopying recharge. Cllr C Shepherd asked how much the invoice was for. The BM advised £22.66.

11 Correspondence

Cllr C Shepherd said confirmation of the contract termination had been received from BT. A letter had been received from Clear Councils Insurers notifying the Parish Council of their new insurer partner: Ecclesiastical.

A grant application had been submitted by the Dersingham Day Centre requesting a grant for £300.00 to assist in their running costs. Councillors discussed the application. **It was resolved to approve the application. The BM will send a confirmation email to the**

RFO with the relevant details to add to the payment's approval list for the next Full Council meeting.

Cllr C Shepherd suggested she speaks with the organisers of the day centre to discuss funding options with them.

12 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

Savings Account options.

Budget Setting

The RFO reported there are 63 second homes currently in Dersingham. The Borough Council are introducing a 100% increase to the Council Tax on second homes in 2025-2026. This will increase the precept the parish council receives by £4,000.00.

13 Date of next meeting – Monday 13th January 2025, 7pm in the Loft

The meeting was placed in closed session at 8.25pm

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 advised there was no update.

(b) Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hall

Cllr C Shepherd advised there was no update.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 8.30pm

Action Points

Cllr M Shepherd

- To review the Contracts Register and give feedback to the BM.

Cllr C Shepherd

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

Business Manager

- To send the relevant information regarding the grant from the Dersingham day Centre to the RFO.

RFO

- To review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset Register for insurance renewal purposes in 2025
- Place the ARK monthly invoice onto the Direct Debit payment list