

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

Present: Cllrs Mike Shepherd (Chairman), Robert Frost, Coral Shepherd, and Brett Thomas.

In attendance: Karen Orgill (Business Manager (BM))

Geraldine Scanlon (Assistant Business Manager (ABM) & Minute Taker).

J MacCallum (Responsible Finance Officer (RFO))

1 Apologies for absence – None received.

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 10th June 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 for an update regarding the task force grant previously authorised.

The BM advised she had liaised with both Thaxters and the representative from Taskforce to arrange a process of purchasing the plants and for an invoice to be sent to the PC for payment. However there has been no response from Taskforce for some time. Cllr Thomas suggested the BM contact Taskforce and ask if they still wish to receive the grant.

Cllr M Shepherd asked if the BM had reported back to Norfolk County Council (NCC) regarding the Grit Bins in the village and requested additional roads be added to the gritting route. The BM assured the information regarding the grit bins would be with NCC before the deadline and an email had been sent to NCC requesting additional roads be added to the gritting route but had received no response. Cllr M Shepherd suggested, when the BM submits the information and gritting request to NCC, she copies Cllr Stuart Dark as County Councillor.

Cllr C Shepherd said a new poster advertising the School Crossing Patrol position has been received which have been placed on the noticeboards.

5 Current Financial Position

a) IAC monthly report

Cllr M Shepherd reported the bank reconciliations for 1st April 2024-30th June 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 Quarter 1 VAT return has been submitted. The RFO advised the VAT to be paid to HMRC by the PC is £112.76.

b) Whole council budgets

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

c) Aged debtors

Cllr M Shepherd asked for an update regarding the two outstanding Aged Debtors. The ABM explained she had tried to contact each business and will continue to do so. Cllr M Shepherd asked if they were genuine invoices that had been raised. The ABM said they had been raised correctly. Cllr Thomas suggested the adverts be removed from the next edition if payment is not made.

d) Reserves

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

6 Insurance Review

Cllr M Shepherd said, although F&A had agreed at the last meeting for the BM to get quotes for the insurance renewal, she had been unable to do so. All companies approached wanted a detailed list of all assets owned by the PC with current replacement costs, however this information is not currently available due to the insurance values not being fully updated since 2020. A quote had been received by our current insurers, Clear, of £4794 for a one-year contract and £4571 for a three-year contract. Cllr M Shepherd proposed F&A recommend to Full Council that we renew for one year with Clear as we now have insufficient time to update our detailed asset register and obtain multiple quotes before renewal date. Our financial regulations currently require at least three competitive quotes for orders over £3000, so we will need to formally request Full Council to suspend regulation 11.1(h) for this order and approve acceptance of the single quote. **After discussion it was resolved to approve the proposal.**

Cllr M Shepherd also proposed that the RFO & BM review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset register to be completed without fail by April 2025. Quotations from at least three brokers are then to be obtained during May 2025 based on the contents of the new asset register. The quotes to be presented to the June 2025 F&A Committee meeting for evaluation and to allow full evaluation of premiums and cover provided. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

The BM requested a copy of the Asset Register be sent to her as she has no access to the EDGE IT system.

Cllr C Shepherd highlighted the one-year quote from Clear exceeds the current budget for 2024/25 by £295.

7 Business Manager Updates

(a) Contract Register – Progress Update

The BM said she had placed the contracts register on SharePoint for tonight's meeting and said the register had been split between. "Contract" and "Non-Contract items" Cllr M Shepherd asked the BM to explain the difference between the two. After discussion it was agreed the RFO and Cllr M Shepherd would review the current document and discuss with BM at another time to be agreed.

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

Cllr M Shepherd said he had reviewed the current FR used by the PC and had produced a draft version for comments which has been shared on SharePoint. He asked the committee if they had any comments regarding the tracked changes. Cllr Thomas said he had read through the document and was happy with the changes made. Cllr M Shepherd proposed he asked Cllr Whitehead to complete the review of the FR and await any further comments from Committee members. **It was resolved to agree the proposal.**

9 IT Update

Cllr M Shepherd said a new PC laptop has been purchased using the BM purchase card., the total cost was £431.98 (Gross) for the laptop and a carry case. The Councillors concerned will be asked to sign a document that stipulates the terms and conditions regarding the use, maintenance, and care of the laptop. The BM asked if Cllr Anderson will be required to sign retrospectively for the PC iPad he is currently in possession of. Cllr M Shepherd confirmed Cllr Anderson would need to sign the appropriate paperwork.

Cllr M Shepherd reported he had been looking into alternative broadband suppliers for the PC office as previously agreed. Lightspeed have confirmed they can supply a full fibre business connection to the building, but their proposal does not include a voice telephone service. They have recommended a partner company who can provide a business VOIP service and a quotation has been sought. The proposal from Lightspeed, which at this stage is subject to a site survey, was discussed in detail. With the information we currently have, it appears that the monthly cost will be similar to or less than our existing services but would be a substantial upgrade on what we currently have.

Should we go ahead with the installation, Lightspeed have offered to provide DVCA with a fibre internet service for public use free of charge as part of their policy of support for local charities and community organisations in their area. Cllr C Shepherd would raise this for discussion at the next DVCA trustees meeting.

It was agreed that Cllr M Shepherd would arrange the Lightspeed site survey and confirm the overall costs for the transfer of services with a view to implement the change as quickly as possible. It was agreed that the Committee wish to implement the solution as quickly as possible and not wait until the next meeting in September.

10 Correspondence

Cllr C Shepherd said notification had been received from Opus energy informing us the account has been taken over by EDF.

11 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

The BM asked if the Gmail email previously used by the Clerk would need to be renewed in November. Cllr M Shepherd said the email account had been too large to transfer to the new Microsoft system. The BM said she would go through the emails throughout August.

12 Date of next meeting – Monday 9th September 2024, 7pm in the Loft

The meeting was placed in closed session at 8.15pm

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 advised the Sportsground association will be instructing a new solicitor to deal with the underlease for them.

(b) Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hall

Cllr C Shepherd stated she had made comments regarding the lease supplied by our solicitor.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 8.25pm

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 new Financial Regulations module and forward a copy for Cllr Whitehead.
- To liaise with Lightspeed regarding the Parish Council internet.
- To liaise with the BM regarding the Contracts Register.
- To contact Cllr Whitehead to ask if she would complete the review on the Financial Regulations.
- To recommend to Full Council a one-year contract be agreed with Clear for £4794, and as three quotes are usually needed as per the PC financial regulations, he proposed the financial regulations 11.1(h) be suspended to allow a single quote to be approved by Full Council.
- To arrange for Cllr Houston and Cllr Brundle to sign for the new office laptop.
- To deliver the laptop to Cllr Houston and Cllr Brundle and train them on using SharePoint.

Cllr C Shepherd

- To contact a specialist roofing/safety company for advice and quotation for installation of safety roof anchorage points.
- To speak to the DVCA trustees regarding using Lightspeed as an internet provider.

Cllr S Whitehead

- To review the new Financial Regulations

Business Manager

- To review and update the Contracts Register as per the Internal Audit recommendations
- To have a written process in place regarding Due Diligence by September 2024.
- To contact Taskforce regarding the agreed grant from the Parish Council.
- To contact NCC regarding grit bins located in the village and request Mountbatten Road and Station Road be added to the County gritting route.

- To review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset Register for insurance renewal purposes in 2025
- Liaise with Cllr M Shepherd regarding the Contracts Register
- Arrange for Cllr Anderson to sign, retrospectively, for the use of the PC iPad.

RFO

- To review and update the insurance valuations on the current Asset Register for insurance renewal purposes in 2025