

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 28th FEBRUARY IN THE PARISH ROOM, FELIXSTOWE ROAD

PRESENT: Mr L Burrows (Chairman), Mr M Irwin (ex officio), Mrs J Hall (Committee). Mr D Parsons.

In attendance: Mrs K Wynn (RFO).

1. Apologies: None received.

2. Interests

2.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI): None declared.

2.2 Local non-pecuniary interests (LNPI): None declared.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda

No members of the public were in attendance.

4.2 Any issues raised by the public

No members of the public were in attendance.

5. Financial Matters

5.1 To receive finance reports for the year to date

The RFO had circulated the finance reports in advance. It was noted that there is £156,922 in Earmarked Reserves and £140,799 in General Reserves.

5.2 To review the underspend in the current financial year's budget

It was **noted** that 77% of the budget has been spent which means there was an underspend of £38,612 so far, with £20,569 of that coming from Salaries which was caused by staff shortages in the autumn of 2023; Land Maintenance - £4,046 although the final payments for this year will most likely be paid in the new financial year; Parish Rooms Expenses - £2261, although the electricity bills for February and March will use this up; Parish Amenities - £4920, this comes from an underspend on street furniture and the Community Orchard project due to the postponement of the planting of Phase 3B until 2024 to 2025 planting season to ensure watering could be ensured.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2a: That the Parish Council approves the Financial Review undertaken on 28.02.24. **Agreed.**

5.3 To approve payment of invoices received, in accordance with the 2023/2024 budget

DECISION F2024/2a: To approve the following payments

Payee	Net £	VAT£	Gross £	Description
Ipswich Computer S	250.00	50.00	300.00	Inv 064861 Laptop set up
Webfactory	199.50	39.90	239.40	New website creation
Amazon	118.54	23.71	142.25	Computer accessories, bags, keyboard etc
Staff Salaries	5029.63		5029.63	February salary
HMRC	1096.96		1096.96	Income tax & NI Contributions
Suffolk County Council	1,557.39		1557.39	Pension Contributions
Tesco	0.90		0.90	Refreshment - milk
Royal Mail	3.45		3.45	1st class tracked letter to CBS
BNP Paribas	125.45	25.09	150.54	Copier lease Inv FLLB5078767 A1B59285
Viking	73.09	14.62	87.71	Office stationary supplies
Ipswich Computer S	67.38	13.48	80.86	Mailbox & User licenses
Tesco	0.90		0.90	Refreshment - milk



J Goodluck	180.00		180.00	Inv 400240 Litter picking
SCL Landscapes	157.64	31.53	189.17	Land maintenance
SCL Landscapes	2030.00	406.00	2436.00	Extra maintenance and installations
Totals	10890.83	604.33	11495.16	

Agreed.

It was noted that there are now only three signatories on the bank accounts.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2b: That the PC appoint a fourth bank signatory. **Agreed.**

5.4 To receive admin Income & Expenditure Report

The RFO had circulated the Admin Income & Expenditure report in advance. It was **noted** that 80% of the budget has so far been spent with the underspend mostly coming from staff shortages in the autumn of 2023 which impacted Salaries and Training. The Website and Social media budget had not been spent, and the cost of the new website will most likely be paid in the new financial year.

5.5 To note the scope and instructions of the internal auditor

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2c: That the Internal Auditor is asked to use the internal audit checklist in the JPAG Practitioner's Guide March 2022 as the basis for the internal audit 2023/24. **Agreed.**

5.6 To note the Suffolk Pension Fund Annual LGPS Return 2022/23: RFO to return data by 21.04.24

It was **noted** that a spreadsheet of the Annual LGPS Return has been sent to the RFO for completion. It was also noted that the Clerk had had some difficulty in confirming that the Admin Assistant was enrolled on the scheme, but this has now been confirmed.

5.7 To note appointment of PKF Littlejohn as external auditor 2022 – 2027 Noted5.8 To receive an update from the RFO on the council's banking arrangements

It was **noted** that The Cambridge Building Society account will be closed on the 13th of May 2024, with the balance to be transferred to the Barclays Current account, and the Mandate change to add the RFO to the Barclays accounts is being processed following some issues with Barclays requiring different signatures to those requested on the original mandate change forms. This matter has now been fast tracked by Barclays.

5.9 To note the Pensions Regulator: automatic enrolment duties – acknowledgement of redeclaration of compliance

Nothing has been received from the Pensions Regulator so far this year.

5.10 To consider match funding for Suffolk County Council's CIL bid for Walking and Cycling Scheme as per the DETC's recommendation

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2d: That the council contribute £2000 from CIL Reserves as match funding for Suffolk County Council's CIL bid for Walking and Cycling Scheme. **Agreed.**

5.11 To consider making a financial contribution to new sensory area at the Recreation Ground

The council are making a bid to the East Suffolk Council Community Partnership for £9600.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2e: That the council make up any shortfall (should there be one) in the amount of funding from the Community Partnership for the Sensory Area Project (adjacent to the car park) from its CIL Reserves. **Agreed.**

5.12 To consider purchasing a basic laptop for the processing of data from SID

A suggestion was made that councillors were prioritised for new laptops over having one for SID.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2f: To purchase a laptop for the use of SID providing there will be someone available to use it. **Agreed.**

6. Finance Officers Report6.1 To consider opening new savings and/or investment accounts

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2g: That the council opens two 35-day notice accounts. One with Nationwide Building Society at an interest rate of 3.35%, and the other with Natwest at an interest rate of 3.25%. Both to be opened with the minimum required deposit with the aim to deposit the £60,000 coming from CBS in May and to reduce the amount held with Barclays to a working balance

of £100,000. **Agreed.**

There is currently more than £220,000 with Barclays not including the Recreation Ground Trust's £6,000 which also comes under the same Financial Services Compensation Scheme £85,000 guarantee.

6.2 To consider switching electricity supplier when the current contract ends on September 17th, 2024

The council is tied to E.ON Next until September 17th, 2024, but Utility Aid can lock the council into a new deal that starts on the 18th of September 2024, now. The deals that Utility Aid provided to the council in early February showed that the council could half their annual bill by switching supplier.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2h: To switch electricity supplier based on the updated comparison list that Utility Aid will send to the RFO on the 6th of March 2024. **Agreed.**

6.3 To note that Ipswich Computer Services have merged their invoicing for licences Noted.

6.4 To consider purchasing Rialtas Alpha for the management of the Recreation Ground Trust's accounts

Moving the Trust's accounts to Rialtas will make completing the Annual Return and managing the accounts simpler for the RFO and enable the Council to reclaim VAT on behalf of the Trust. The cost of setting the Trust up on Rialtas would be a one-off payment of £200 with an additional ongoing payment of £100 for annual support. Rialtas co-term their pricing cycle to align with budget years, upon receipt of a signed quotation they would invoice the council to the 31st of March 2024. However, they would deduct the fees that the council have paid in advance for support and maintenance from the new fees starting the 1st of April.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2i: To purchase Rialtas Alpha software for the management of Recreation Ground Trust accounts for a one-off payment of **£200** with an additional ongoing payment of **£100** for annual support. **Agreed.**

6.5 To review scope of litter picking across Martlesham

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2j: To carry out a review of litter picking across council administered amenities, considering the current costs, who picks where, and any sources of further funding in the future. **Agreed.**

7. Annual Reviews

7.1 To note the Annual Review Programme Noted.

7.2 To review Asset Register (changes in red on full register)

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2k: To approve the Asset Register with the following additions:

- SF48 – should be the Coronation Oak and the Jubilee oak X 2 tree guards and plaques (1 still to come)
- standpipe and metal cupboard at Kronji's Piece and at the Community Orchard

Agreed.

7.3 Equal Opportunities Policy, now Equality and Diversity Policy

There were no amendments to the policy.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2l: To approve the Equality and Diversity Policy without any amendments. **Agreed.**

Councillors to be provided with the CALC Template when reviewing policies as previously agreed by full council. **Agreed.**

7.4 To review Complaints Procedure

A new Complaints Policy had been adapted from the SALC and SLCC's model documents.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2m: To adopt the new Complaints Policy. **Agreed.**

7.5 To review Employment law, policies, pay

There was nothing new to report.

7.6 To review Facilities e.g. Parish Room

There were no amendments to the Parish Room document.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2n: To approve the Parish Room Policy without amendment. Agreed.

7.7 To review the Freedom of Information Publication scheme

There were no amendments to the Freedom of Information Publication scheme.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2o: To approve the Freedom of Information Publication scheme without amendment. Agreed.

7.8 To review the Safeguarding Policy

There were no amendments to the Safeguarding Policy.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2p: To approve the Safeguarding Policy without amendment. Agreed.

At 9:30 the following decision was made:

DECISION F2024/2b: To suspend Standing Order 3w to complete all business on the agenda.

Agreed. it was resolved to extend the meeting to complete the agenda. Agreed.

8. To receive an update on the installation of a Nissen hut by the Portal Woodlands Conservation Group and consider any request for financial support

The Chair of the Portal Woodlands Conservation Group had reported that they had been fortunate to find a suitable Nissen hut at a greatly reduced price that they have first refusal on until the 11th of March. Funds are being sought for the installation of hut.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/2q: That PC funds should not be allocated to the purchase of a Nissen Hut until planning permission for the hut's installation has been approved. Agreed.

9. To note any items to be added to the next agenda

None.

10. To consider what this meeting has achieved and what contributions can be made to Martlesham Newsletters/Facebook/Website

None recorded due to time restraints.

11. To note that the next F & GPC meeting will be held at 7:30pm on the 22nd of May 2024

12. Exclusion of press and public - To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due to confidential business under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, S. 1(2)

As there was nothing to be discussed at item 13 this was not necessary.

13. To receive an update on the Mcarthy Stone carpark and to consider making a recommendation to Full Council

There were no updates.

The meeting was closed at 9.45pm.



Chairman, 6th March 2024