

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

PRESENT: Cllr L Burrows (Chairman), Cllr M Irwin (ex officio), Cllr J Hall (Committee).

In attendance: Mrs K Wynn (RFO).

1. Apologies and approval of absences

Apologies were received from Cllr O'Brien Baker

2. To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4. To consider recommending that the council hold monthly surgeries and presentations to parishioners and local groups that operate within the parish of Martlesham

Cllr Parsons had proposed holding monthly surgeries and separately, presentations to local groups and organisations. Committee members agreed that more public engagement would be positive, and that Cllr Parsons should be encouraged to progress his proposal.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5a: That the Council consider new ways of engaging with the public possibly including holding surgeries, providing speakers for community groups and hosting meet the council events? **Agreed.**

5. Financial Matters

5.1 To approve payment of invoices received in accordance with the 2024/2025 budget

DECISION F2024/5a: To approve the following payments:

Payee	Net £	VAT£	Gross £	Description
BT Business	169.36	33.87	203.23	Quarterly phone charges Apr-Jul
Post Office Ltd	8.95		8.95	Special Delivery of legal documents
Tesco	.90		.90	Refreshment - milk for meetings
CPRE	60.00		60.00	Membership 24/25 Memb # 0676105
Totals	239.21	33.87	273.08	

5.2 To note May Admin Income & Expenditure

The RFO had circulated the Admin Income & Expenditure report in advance. It was noted that the first tranche of the precept (£75,000) had been received along with a CIL payment £39,192. The cost £6,726, for installation of battery storage for the solar PV had been paid for under Capital Projects funded from CIL EMR. Section 137 grants had been distributed in April of £3,424 which had been taken from EMR Section 137 grants. This had left a deficit of £984 in the EMR. As a budget for grants of £4390 had been set in 2023 there was £3,406 remaining. The RFO suggested moving this to the EMR Section 137, and the committee agreed. **Noted**

5.3 To note verification of bank reconciliations for year ending 31 March 2024

Councillor bank reconciliations for February and March 2024 had yet to be completed. These will now be completed along with April and May going forward by Cllr Parsons.

Cllr Hall wished it to be noted that she was sorry to be giving up completing the reconciliations.

Noted

5.4 To consider recommending to full council the annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 – completed page 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and separate report from internal auditor

The internal auditor is satisfied that we have complied with legislative requirements.

It was noted that incidental expenditure on VAT rated items at Tesco had not had the VAT reclaimed. The RFO will in future request that these items, where possible will be purchased

separately from the non-VAT rated items such as food etc. which will make it easier to enter into RBS and thus reclaim the minimal VAT.

The auditor was pleased to see that all payments were now electronic, that nearly all invoices are provided in PDF form and that bank statements are now paperless.

Mention was made of bank accounts and interest rates. With the closure of the CBS account this matter is now a priority and is on the agenda for consideration.

Separate to his report, the auditor noted that under 'staff costs' (Box 4) on the return the figure was £88,319 but, on the Income and Expenditure Account report under running costs 'salaries', the figure was £88,424. The difference of £105 was from the cost of payroll from SALC for 6 months. It was included (correctly) under the cost centre 'salaries' but as it is not a salary it was not included in the calculation for box 4. Rialtas had recommended recording it in this way, but the auditor suggested that payroll should, for the sake of misunderstanding, go under 'administration'. This suggestion has now been implemented.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5b: To accept the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 - page 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), and the accompanying written report by the internal auditor. **Agreed.**

5.5 To consider recommending to full council the Income & expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 with Supporting Statement and 2 appendices

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5c: To approve the Income & Expenditure account for year ended 31 March 2024. **Agreed.**

5.6 To consider recommending to full council the Annual Governance Statement & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/2024 Form 3 for year ended 31 March 2024 - Section 1 Annual Governance Statement –answering 'yes' to statements 1 – 9 (page 4)

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5d: To agree answering 'yes' to statements 1 – 9 in Section 1 Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance Statement & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/2024 Form 3 (page 4). **Agreed.**

5.7 To consider recommending to full council section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 of the AGAR for year ended 31 March 2024 including accounting statements (page 5), bank reconciliation, balance sheet for reconciliation of boxes 7 & 8, and explanation of significant variances

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5e: To approve Section 2 – Accounting statements 2023/24 of the AGAR for year ended 31 March 2024 including accounting statements (page 5), bank reconciliation, working detail for reserves reconciliation of boxes 7 & 8, explanation of significant variances.

Agreed.

5.8 To consider recommending to full council the period for the exercise of public rights relating to the annual accounts.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5f: To approve Monday 24th June – Friday 02nd August 2024 as the period for the exercise of public rights relating to the annual accounts. **Agreed.**

5.9 To consider purchasing new PC for the clerk or upgrading RAM (random access memory) across the office computers

The Clerk reported that since ICS had freed up disk space on her PC, she had not encountered any issues, so at this stage no further action is required. **Noted**

5.10 To consider using the available funds in the Section 106 Sport budget for the repurposing of the pétanque piste and the football goal posts

The council had been notified that £8,230 is in the Section 106 Sport budget, available for applications from the council to improve service provision in the parish, this may include play space, renovation, improvements, or capital costs amongst other options. The R&AC have recommended to the Council, R2024/5b: That the request for two small, fixed football goals to be located on the Recreation Ground is accepted. In addition to this is there was a suggestion that this money could also be used for repurposing the pétanque piste along with repairs to the Diamond Jubilee Bike Trails.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5g: That the Section 106 fund be used towards the goal posts and

repurposing of the pétanque piste at the Recreation Ground, and repairs to the Diamond Jubilee Bike Trails with the balance being met from CIL. It was requested that the Communities Officer at ESC be asked if there is a time limit on this current fund.

6. Banking - To consider opening a savings account with Unity Trust Bank

The RFO has resent the personal information forms for Natwest to all signatories, this information will also be used for the Nationwide Building Society application. The RFO has received one completed form to date. To ensure that council funds are covered by the FSC scheme that guarantees £85,000 with each financial organisation and following the closure of the CBS account the council should consider opening a fourth account. Unity Trust Bank regularly deal with parish councils and offer relatively good rates of interest, but the council would either have to open a current account, which incurs a £6 monthly fee, or a basic savings account to access the fixed term deposit accounts. The savings account has no fee but withdrawing money from the bank must be done via CHAPs which incurs a fee of £28.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5h: That the council opens a basic savings account with the Unity Trust Bank and a 90-Day Deposit 3.06% AER(£85k-£10m) account with an £85,000 deposit.

7. Annual Review of Policies and Procedures

7.1 To review and recommend to full council the Standing Orders.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5i: To adopt the Standing Orders. Agreed.

7.2 To review and recommend to full council the 2024 NALC model Financial Regulations

The RFO had reviewed and circulated the new financial regulations, transferred information from the existing financial regulations and highlighted areas for councillors' consideration. The committee reviewed the document in its entirety finalizing it ready for approval by full council.

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5j: That the council adopts the updated 2024 Financial Regulations.

Cllr Irwin requested that RESOLUTION C2024/5z: To accept RECOMMENDATION R2024/5a: To extend the land maintenance contract due to the excellent working relationship the staff have with the land maintenance team, praise received from groups and individuals and a lack of staff and councillor resources following a 'quality' review by the Council was approved under 5.12 iii. of the new financial regulations. Noted

The committee resolved to extend the meeting at 9:30pm

7.3 To note a reminder to all councillors to complete, review annually, and update as necessary the Register of Interests – this will be on the June full council

Clerk to include on the June PC agenda. Noted

7.4 To review and recommend to full council the Grant Policy

RECOMMENDATION F2024/5k: To adopt the Grant Policy with the following changes:

Legal and financial matters

2. That the financial support requested is proportionate to the funds the council has earmarked to support all such proposals. The parish council will earmark a maximum of 10% of the funds which are available to it under section 137 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1972 to support all such proposals.

And under Further considerations the addition of:

1. The grant of support from the council may be the key to unlocking further support from other organisations after removing this from essential requirements. Agreed.

7.5 To note insurance cover

The Council have entered a 3-year insurance agreement following a review in September 2022. Cllr Hall advised that the insurance company should be updated on the transfer of the Runway Heritage Carpark to the parish council so that all items on site are insured and added to the asset register, and Public Liability is in place. All items at the carpark can be found on the 'Carpark Features Map' Noted

Due to time constraints the meeting was closed 9:43pm

Draft until signed

Chairman, June 5th 2024