

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee held on Monday 10 February 2020 at 7.00pm in The Garden Room, Dersingham Centre, Dersingham

Present: Cllr M Shepherd, Cllr B Hopkins, Cllr B Anderson and Cllr C Shepherd

In attendance: Sarah Bristow (Clerk) and Geraldine Scanlon (Admin Assistant)

539 Apologies for absence

It was resolved to accept apologies from Cllr D Murrell, Cllr R Frost and Cllr G Billard

540 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest.

541 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 13 January 2020.

Cllr M Shepherd asked if the minutes provided at the meeting were the same as those previously circulated. The Clerk advised they were. Cllr M Shepherd said there were some points that could not be agreed between the Clerk and himself therefore needed Cllrs agreement the changes were to be made.

a) It was resolved for the minutes to be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record after the follow amendments:

529: Mid way through paragraph, sentence should read "Cllr Shepherd advised that he was still unable to check the NS&I Account so was not prepared to sign off the bank reconciliation for this quarter"

532: Quarter way through first paragraph, sentence inserted after "The Clerk had emailed round asking if signatories could make themselves available on certain dates but had only received one reply" "In future Clerk to ring round if urgent response needed"

Three quarters way down, sentence beginning "Cllr Shepherd asked" should read "Cllr Shepherd asked to be copied into all emails regarding the bank account"

Fourth paragraph, sentence should read "Cllr Shepherd felt that there was not enough time to go over prior setting the Precept and felt that changes are still needed"

The Clerk asked for it to be minuted she was most disgusted that after 15 years of minuting the Finance Committee meetings it was felt she was no longer able to do so. She felt it was Cllr M Shepherds choice to use the Admin Assistant to take minutes, if someone had not made detailed notes throughout the previous meeting then changes requested would not have been known. Cllr M Shepherd said in personal experience it is difficult for a person participating in a meeting to take accurate minutes and in the case of the Finance & Admin Committee it is the Clerk/RFO participation that was most important. Cllr C Shepherd advised

that the decision to delegate the minute-taking to the Admin Assistant had been taken by the Staffing Committee.

b) Matters Arising from the Minutes

All points were discussed

Cllr Anderson had had been to look at the rusty steel lamp columns and had found the rust was higher up the columns than expected and could possibly be cleaned using wire wool. **This item is to be referred back to Environment.**

542 Current Financial Position

The Clerk had previously sent round the reports. (Please see attached)

a) Whole Council Budgets.

The NS&I annual statement had been received, there had been only one interest payment in January therefore Cllr M Shepherd was happy to sign the bank reconciliation as completed.

Cllr M Shepherd queried why the NS&I statement had been addressed to Mrs Hathaway. The Clerk advised it had been addressed to her because Mrs Hathaway, Mr Davey and Cllr Anderson were still signatories.

The Clerk advised it had been previously suggested to close the NS&I account. Cllr M Shepherd said the rate of interest was better with NS&I and putting the reserves into the account could be an option. The Clerk advised that you could not instantly access funds in the NS&I account unlike the Barclays account. Cllr M Shepherd suggested closing the current NS&I account and opening a new one, which is done online making the funds instantly available. In order to close the current account, the signatories would have to be sorted out. **The Clerk is to contact the NS&I helpdesk to seek advice on the necessary signatory changes.**

Cllr M Shepherd advised the internal Control officers quarterly report is ready to be presented at the next Full Council meeting.

The reconciliation check for January had been completed and Cllr M Shepherd was happy to report only one minor query had been found regarding the bank charges shown as unpresented at month end. The Clerk advised she had put the charge on the system when the notification had been received in January even though the money would not be transferred until February.

Cllr M Shepherd is happy to sign off the January reconciliation.

The Clerk advised the Environment had overspent on the War Memorial and had therefore journaled £894 from General Maintenance to the War Memorial.

b) Aged Debtors.

The Clerk advised there were currently no aged debtors

c) Reserves.

Nothing to report.

d) VAT. This item was dealt with within the Action Points of the Finance Minutes of 13 January 2020

543 Financial Processes

Cllr M Shepherd asked if everyone had read the reports circulated.

Discussion was had regarding emails and the amount of attachments used currently by the Clerk when sending invoice information and reports to Cllr's. It was felt that having them posted to a secure cloud storage that could be accessed by both Cllr's and staff would be a preferred option in the future. Cllr M Shepherd advised the current email system has also been reviewed and a Microsoft replacement system had been discussed which would offer options for cloud storage, Cllr M Shepherd is to prepare a report for Cllr's giving more details. The Clerk advised she had been in touch with System 3 regarding the Office 365 renewal. Cllr M Shepherd asked the Clerk to forward the email trail between the Clerk and System 3 to him to enable him to know the current situation.

Cllr M Shepherd suggested once the dual authorisation had been confirmed as working and a process put into place that Cllr's are happy with, with regards to making payments and printing the necessary documentation, a regular payments list could be generated for those payments that could be authorised yearly or when payment details changed, reducing the amount of authorisation needed on a monthly basis. A process would then be established for nonstandard/ one off payments.

Cllr M Shepherd said that reports such as Budget Headings transaction details are circulated via email prior to the meetings. He felt that as a Council we should be moving away from printing the reports every meeting and Cllr's needed to be encouraged to read the reports before attending the meetings. The Clerk said some Cllrs prefer a paper copy rather than reading from the screen. Cllr Hopkins stated that sometimes receiving pages of reports could be overwhelming. Cllr M Shepherd said perhaps some in house training could be arranged to refine what is needed for circulation and to give Cllr's a better understanding of the reports content. Cllr Anderson proposed asking Full Council what they felt about the reports only being circulated electronically. **It was resolved to get Cllr's opinion at Full Council.**

544 Internal Audit – update

a) Audit Report Action Plan.

Discussion was had on all points of the Internal Audit report previously circulated.

1 Segregation of duties:

Cllr M Shepherd and Cllr Noble have arranged to meet tomorrow to allow Cllr Noble to log into the Barclays account and establish if the Dual Authorisation has been put in place. If the process can be completed Cllr M Shepherd will then meet with Cllr Anderson and Cllr Frost to talk them through the process. The Clerk advised a payment of £10.00 had been created for authorisation by Cllr Noble to Cllr M Shepherd as a test payment.

3 Contract recording and monitoring:

The Clerk had circulated a draft contract register as previously requested. Cllr C Shepherd asked if the staffing salaries should be shown on the register. The Clerk agreed to add the salaries. Cllr M Shepherd suggested two lists may be needed, one as a Contracts Register and the other a Regular Payments list.

4 Updating asset listings:

Cllr M Shepherd advised he had looked at templates from BHIB and Parish Online for Asset Registers, he felt that the templates were not too dissimilar to that currently used by the Council. The BHIB template included the trees as assets, it would be reviewed if Parish Council owned trees would be listed on the Councils asset register. It was agreed that the trees previously surveyed but that are not on DPC owned land will not be included on the asset register.

Cllr M Shepherd enquired if the damaged lamp column had been replaced, the Clerk advised she had heard nothing more and would chase. Cllr M Shepherd asked if the column would retain its original asset number. Cllr Anderson advised the original asset number would be retained. Cllr M Shepherd requested the Clerk to provide details when the work had been completed.

5 Bank account review:

Regarding the bank account review, Cllr M Shepherd asked what paperwork needed to be signed, is it the cashbook? The Clerk advised she presumed so.

6 Presentation of the bank account position:

Completed. First quarterly report to next full council.

7 Access to finance systems:

Nothing new to report.

9 Data breaches:

Cllr M Shepherd advised this would be achieved for the next Full Council meeting.

10 Risk Management:

Cllr M Shepherd asked the Clerk the current position with regards to this, the Clerk advised she was still going through several Risk Management forms used by other councils.

Cllr Hopkins raised the subject of billing DVCA for their photocopier usage. The Clerk advised she had been able to extract the figures needed. Cllrs discussed the volume of usage. Cllr M Shepherd suggested the figures be extracted quarterly to enable regular billing. The Clerk advised she had previously enquired about fobs to access the photocopier however this would need software installing, fobs were only supplied in packs of 50, a reader would need to be installed on the machine. The entire process would cost £900.00. An alternative had been offered, Paper cut which would allow everyone to access the copier with their own unique code, this would need software installing. This would also incur a cost of £900.00.

b) Mobile.

The Clerk advised there had currently been no further action taken on this.

545 Bank Accounts.

a) Barclays

Cllr M Shepherd advised all checks had been completed with only the Debit card as an outstanding item.

b) NS&I

Cllr M Shepherd stated the statement had been received and was happy all was in order.

c) Alternative Banking

The Clerk advised she had received good reports from other Councils regarding Unity Trust Bank, however there is no Debit Card facility only Credit Card. The Clerk said a statement would be received with a Credit Card giving documentation of transactions for the reconciliation check. A spending limit can still be put into place with a Credit Card. Cllr C Shepherd suggested the bank accounts remain as they are currently for six months to bring stability and review the situation when the Council reconvene after the Summer break.

546 Dersingham Centre Updates

a) Liaison Group

Cllr M Shepherd advised there had been little change since the last Full Council Meeting.

Cllr M Shepherd and Cllr C Shepherd had met with the Big Lottery and DVCA. Cllr C Shepherd advised she had completed the Annual Report that needed to be submitted to Big Lottery to show how the DVCA is running and is it is achieving the requirement stipulated in the Business Plan to the Big Lottery. However, the form submitted did not meet the requirements by the Big Lottery therefore the DVCA are to instigate a survey of users to enable the form to be resubmitted satisfactorily.

b) Leases and Licences.

Nothing to report

547 Correspondence Received

a) Grant request.

Cllr M Shepherd asked if a new grant request had been received as there had not been one circulated. The Clerk advised there had been one received and would re-circulate to Cllrs.

548 Items for inclusion at the next Full Meeting.

Same Agenda

Climate Change – All committees inclusive.

549 Items for inclusion on the website.

Nothing to be included.

550 Date and time of next meeting

Monday 09 March 2020 at 7.00pm At Dersingham Village Centre.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Action Points

Cllr M Shepherd

- **Email disclaimer slip**

Clerk

- **Complete VAT return until end of Dec 19.**
- **Speak to Cllr Hipkin re dual authorization.**
- **Chase Barclays for meeting/Answers.**
- **Find out details of alternative banking arrangements.**
- **Look into pay as you go mobile deals.**
- **To contact the NS&I helpdesk and arrange signatory changes.**
- **Circulate grant request as per correspondence.**
- **Email Cllr M Shepherd email trail between herself and System 3 regarding 365**

