

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee held virtually on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 at 7.00pm.

**Present:** Cllr M Shepherd (Chairman), Councillor B Hopkins, Councillor D Murrell Councillor R Frost, Cllr C Shepherd and Councillor G Billard (Via phone link)

**In attendance:** Sarah Bristow (Clerk) and Geraldine Scanlon (Communications Officer)

**564 Apologies for absence**

**It was resolved to accept apologies from Councillor Anderson.**

**565 Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest.

**566 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.**

**a) It was resolved for the minutes to be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.**

**b) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Minute number 553 regarding the photocopier use by the DVCA. Councillor M Shepherd asked the Clerk is she was able to attend the office to extract the copier readings for the DVCA. It has been six months since the previous reading and the copier has been in use throughout the lockdown. The Clerk advised she would obtain reading by the end of the month.

Councillor M Shepherd asked the Clerk if she had issued written correspondence detailed in the minute 553 to NS&I informing of new signatories and requesting the removal of old signatures. The Clerk advised she had written twice, Councillors Noble, Frost and Anderson had all signed as new signatories and Mrs Hathaway had signed to be removed. Mr Davey's signature was not needed. There had been no response to the Clerks correspondence therefore she had tried numerous times to call NS&I however was always left on hold or disconnected. The last attempt resulted in a recorded message explaining NS&I were unable to deal with correspondence and would only deal with urgent requests.

Minute item 544 it had been agreed after discussion not to include the Internal Audit report. However, at the last Full Council meeting the Clerk had asked if the Cash Book summary should be included with Councillor M Shepherds Internal Audit Report, full council agreed it should be included. After discussion it was decided the summary submitted should satisfy requirements for Full Council and be attached to the minutes.

Councillor M Shepherd asked if Councillor Anderson now has access the Barclays bank account to release payments. The Clerk thought it was now in place. Councillor Hopkins advised the last information he had was Councillor Anderson did not have authorisation.

With regards to the renewal of the photocopier lease, the Clerk advised she had been approached by the representative with whom the original contract was established with and was advised to be wary of renewing the new contract with the current supplier as they may increase the costings for maintenance.

Councillor C Shepherd asked the duration of the current contract. The Clerk advised it was a three-year contract for both consumables and maintenance.

**567 Current Financial Position.**

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

**a) Whole Council Budgets.**

Councillor C Shepherd asked what the expenditure was under code 1040 Office equipment/maintenance of £331.04. The Clerk advised she would investigate it. Communications Committee is currently running with a deficit due to lack of businesses advertising this year. It is hoped the deficit will be reduced with more advertising space being sold however there could be a shortfall of £3000 - £4000 at the end of the financial year. Communications Committee are to review changes that could be made to reduce costs etc. Councillor M Shepherd suggested there could be funds available to transfer to Communications however, this is something that would need to be reviewed and discussed with the Clerk.

The Clerk advised she had received a VAT bill for £400.00 this was due because the Parish Councils income was more than its expenditure. The Clerk said it may be that expenditure was down due to less outgoings on the village hall. Councillor C Shepherd asked if it was whole Council expenditure not just Committee based. The Clerk confirmed it was across the Council expenditure. After discussion Councillor M Shepherd asked the Clerk to investigate further the amount payable and how it will impact throughout the remainder of the financial year. The Clerk informed councillor's that notification from Ashton Shaw had been received detailing a refund of £2856.24 for National Insurance That had been claimed back and would be paid in late January. This covered only the previous financial year. Councillor M Shepherd queried if previous years could be reviewed. The Clerk said Ashton Shaw advised they are unable to go back further as Burrells hold all the information needed. However, she would be able to extract the details from edge and supply to Ashton Shaw. Councillor M Shepherd said the overpayment was to HMRC not Burrells or Ashton Shaw and therefore, the claim should be made to HMRC. Councillor M Shepherd advised there had been a list of payments submitted to him by the Clerk to enable him to complete his Internal Audit check however they had not been presented to Full Council for approval. The Clerk is to add payments to the next full council meeting. £10,000 had been received from the Borough Council as a grant in respect of the Covid Virus. Councillor M Shepherd proposed this be ringfenced to ensure all expenditure is approved by full council. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

**b) Aged Debtors.**

Councillor M Shepherd advised there are no aged debtors.

**c) Reserves.**

Nothing to report.

**d) VAT.**

Item discussed under 566 (a)

**568 Internal Audit.**

**a) Appointment of Auditor for 2020/21.**

Councillor M Shepherd advised an Internal Auditor is needed for 20/21 and the first visit is now due he therefore proposed a quote be obtained from

Price Bailey. They completed the previous Internal Audit with many Improvements being made. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.** The Clerk asked if three quotes were needed. Councillor M Shepherd advised that as it was a specialist service there was no need to seek further quotes. The Clerk suggested requesting a quote for three years as may reduce the cost. Councillor M Shepherd agreed it was something worth investigating.

**569 Standing Orders.**

**Covid 19 Legislation Cover.**

Councillor C Shepherd advised that the Clerk had amended Standing Orders regarding the Covid legislation. However, she felt it was not necessary to quote the legislation as Standing Orders are a procedural document. Wev are due to review them but in the meantime a separate protocol is required as a code of conduct for virtual meetings. Current legislation is in place until May 2021 and the Government should review it around April/May next year. Councillor C Shepherd proposed postponing changing Standing Orders to accommodate the Coveid legislation and she would report a protocol to Full Council next week.

**It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

The Clerk advised Standing Orders would have to be suspended before the start of each Full Council meeting. Councillor M Shepherd advised this was not done before each meeting during the Centre build however the Standing orders had been suspended. The clerk advised she could not recall what procedure had been put in place at that time. Councillor C Shepherd stated Full Council would be compliant with legislation only using a different protocol regarding virtual meetings.

**570 Financial Regulations.**

Councillor M Shepherd advised the Finance Committee had been asked to give consideration to a Councillors request at the Full Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to see all quotes received giving them more information before a decision was made. He expressed concern that Full Council approving all order to be placed would slow down the process and works being achieved. There would need to be changes in the procurement procedure. Currently the Clerk authorised to the value of £500 for orders placed.

Committees have delegated powers for orders between £500 and £5000  
Full Council approves orders over £5000.

Councillor M Shepherds suggestion is that Full Council approve all orders over £500 and that councillors would have a quote pack emailed to them, along with the agenda, by the Clerk. This will include contractor names, job specification, value of quote etc, however, this information is not to be discussed outside of the Parish Council. Councillor C Shepherd said all quotes received should be discussed as a private part of the agenda, excluding press and public.

Councillor M Shepherd advised he had started to prepare a report for Full Council regarding the procurement process changes for ratification.

**571 Telephone Contract.**

The Clerk advised she had circulated details of the contract renewal offer from BT. Councillor M Shepherd asked if the current contract had already expired as

the dates were conflicting between those shown on the contracts list and the date supplied for renewal by BT. The Clerk advised the contract quote would not be affected by the contact dates.

Councillor M Shepherd stated he had queries regarding the offer and would like the Clerk to investigate further.

1. Is the new contract inclusive of calls?
2. Regarding the 4G assure, is 4G data included in the charge with no further costs being incurred. Can this be confirmed?
3. What is covered by the Enhanced IT Support?
4. BT Device Protection, again what is covered?

The Clerk is to contact BT for further information.

Councillor M Shepherd queried the quote given for the mobile phone as this had been discussed previously and agreed to remain with the current provider. The quote received was very similar to the current one.

Councillor C Shepherd asked if it was proposed we agree the new BT contract subject to the outcome of the issues raised. Councillor M Shepherd advised he could see no major problems with the suggested contract.

## **572 Bank Accounts.**

### **a) Barclays – Payment Authorisation.**

This item was discussed minute number 566b

### **b) NS&I Mandate update.**

The Clerk advised she had attempted to contact the call centre several times but had been left on hold, with the call then being disconnected. She had previously requested online access to obtain bank statements and had been advised she did not have authority to do so as she is not a signatory.

## **573 Dersingham Centre.**

### **Committee to receive update from Councillor M Shepherd.**

The leases have been signed and are now with Land Registry.

The heat pump gates are now in place there are a few issues however these have been addressed and will be rectified imminently.

Discussion is underway with DVCA regarding Air Conditioning in the Garden Room at the Centre. Councillor C Shepherd had emailed DVCA trustees asking for comments raised by Councillor Anderson regarding alternatives to the installation of air conditioning. There was a good response from trustees with clear justification for the need of air conditioning. Alternatives had been investigated but were either impractical or not in keeping with the building etc. A big concern was loss of revenue as the Garden Room was not being used to its full capacity. At times the temperature in the room would be in the excess of forty degrees.

Councillor M Shepherd said he would write a report regarding the Air Conditioning, installation and costings etc to take to the next Liaison Group meeting with DVCA for discussion.

## **574 Climate Change.**

Nothing to report as Councillor Anderson was not present.

## **575 Correspondence.**

None received.

**576 Items for inclusion on the next agenda.**

**577 Items for Website.**

No items for the Website.

**578 Date and time of next meeting.**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October to be held virtually at 7.00pm**

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm

**Action Points**

**Cllr M Shepherd**

- **Email disclaimer slip**

**Clerk**

- **To contact the NS&I helpdesk and arrange signatory changes.**
- **To contact CCS regarding the recycling of used toner cartridges**

**Action Points Finance Committee Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.**

**Clerk**

- **Investigate further VAT bill received for payment.**
- **Add missed payments supplied for Internal Audit check for approval by Full Council 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**
- **Place £10,000.00 Covid virus Borough Council grant in reserves.**
- **To contact BT regarding new contract and queries raised by Councillor M Shepherd, minute number 571.**

**Councillor M Shepherd**

- **Complete report for discussion at Full Council regarding changes in Procurement Procedures.**
- **Write report detailing Air Conditioning, installation and costings for the Garden Room, Dersingham Village Centre.**