

Minutes Meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 17th October 2022 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor M Shepherd (Chairman), Councillor D Hipkin (Vice Chairman), Councillor R Frost, and Councillor C Shepherd.

In attendance: Karen Orgill (Business Manager)
Geraldine Scanlon (Assistant Business Manager & Minute Taker)

768 To consider apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Brian Anderson.

769 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations by councillors in any agenda item

None received

770 Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting 13th June 2022

a) To approve the Minutes

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

b) Matters arising

Action points were discussed and those completed were removed.

771 Current Financial Position

a) Current Financial Position.

Cllr M Shepherd reported he had circulated the Internal Audit Controller (IAC) report and there were discrepancies carried over from the August IAC report that were still outstanding. The IAC checks have been completed on the September 2022 accounts, since then confirmation had been received from the Locum RFO that the issues raised previously on the reserves had been rectified and now correlated with the Cashbook, an updated report will be presented at the next Full Council meeting. The overall bank reconciliations were all in order.

b) Whole Council Budgets.

This is covered by minute 771a

c) Age Debtors.

Mrs Scanlon advised she had spoken to the relevant parties regarding the unpaid invoices. One had confirmed payment was made 10th October 2022, Cllr M Shepherd said he would confirm payment had been received. Mrs Scanlon had re-issued the invoice to the second aged debtor who had confirmed they would make payment asap.

d) Reserves.

This is covered by minute 771a

772 Budget Setting Process

Cllr M Shepherd gave a brief description of the budget setting process, explaining that each Committee should set their budget and submit a suggested budget to the Finance Committee to be reviewed and included in the whole council budgets in December for the next financial year. The Precept will be set at a separate meeting in January.

773 Future of NS&I Account

Cllr C Shepherd advised the previous Clerk had enquired if the account could be converted to an online account, but she had been unable to do so. Cllr M Shepherd asked if Councillors had suggestions for the future of the NS&I account. After discussion it was agreed for the Business Manager (BM) to enquire if the NS&I account can be converted to online, if the conversion cannot take place to investigate alternative bank accounts that offer the criteria needed.

774 Telephone and Broadband contract renewal.

Cllr M Shepherd reported a BT quote had been circulated prior to the meeting and advised the current contract with BT expired at the beginning of September 2022, therefore as the Parish Council are now out of contract the monthly charge has increased by £10.00. To renew the BT contract would not guarantee improvement in internet speeds but would tie us to BT for two years. Currently the Village Centre is unable to have Fibre Broadband from any provider. Cllr Hipkin asked if there was a budget that would allow the purchase of sim cards to test the speed etc of other mobile providers. Cllr M Shepherd confirmed a budget was available. Councillors discussed alternatives; it was agreed Cllr Hipkin would investigate alternative providers.

775 IT Update

Cllr M Shepherd had circulated a detailed report regarding the proposed upgrade to the current IT systems. He advised the staff had been shown a demonstration of the proposed system configuration which was well received. Councillors were given a brief overview of how the new system would work and there was a full discussion. A phased implementation of the full system was proposed, commencing with staff access. Each additional user added will require a licence at a cost of £4.50 per user per month. Cllr Hipkin asked if Microsoft Teams had been considered as he felt it may be a simpler system to negotiate.

After discussion it was approved, in principle, to the roll out of the new system following the plan outlined including the purchase of new licences as necessary. Cllr M Shepherd to discuss with Councillors the computers they currently use to access email and to speak with the consultant at System3 about Microsoft Teams.

776 Technology Refresh of Staffing IT

Cllr M Shepherd advised he had circulated a Staff Technology Refresh proposal, giving an overview of current equipment used and suggested replacements which also takes into consideration staff requests. Cllr Hipkin considered that the cost of the laptops was high and asked if the option of leasing new equipment had been considered. Councillors discussed the benefits of both purchasing and leasing new equipment.

It was resolved to approve the replacement of the IT equipment as soon as possible and for Cllr Hipkin to obtain details of leasing companies so that comparative costs can be obtained. It was agreed that the final decision as to whether to purchase or lease will be taken by email to prevent delay to the IT upgrade project.

777 Correspondence

a) Consider SAAA Opt-out communication concerning external auditor

Cllr M Shepherd said correspondence had been received from SAAA and proposed the Parish Council remain with the SAAA central external auditor. **It was resolved to approve the proposal.**

b) Consider PKF Littlejohn's report and required action.

Cllr M Shepherd advised a report had been received from PKF Littlejohn informing the Parish Council they were unable to complete the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) on time and advised notice of this had to be displayed. The BM had uploaded the relevant documents to the Parish Council website.

Cllr C Shepherd advised correspondence had been received from NP Law Public Sector Legal Services with a survey regarding subscriptions or a reduced fee for legal services. It was agreed that Cllr C Shepherd would complete the survey and if necessary for the Parish Council to seek legal advice from NP Law at a reduced rate if required.

778 Items for inclusion at the next meeting

Budget setting.

779 Date and time of the next meeting

Monday 14th November 2022. 7.00pm, the Loft, Dersingham Centre.

With no further business public were asked to leave at 8.25pm

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

780 Leases Update

a) Sportsground

Cllr C Shepherd reported that there will be a delay due to transfer of ownership of the land.

b) Social Club

Cllr C Shepherd said a quote had been accepted from Ward Gethin Archer and work will commence on the lease once they have received confirmation of acceptance from the Business Manager.

Action Points

Business Manger

- To add Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to a future Finance & Administration Committee agenda.
- Investigate alternatives to the existing NS&I postal account.

Cllr Hipkin

- To investigate mobile Fibre Broadband providers.
- To investigate laptop leasing companies.

Cllr C Shepherd

- To complete and return the form received from NP Law Public Sector Legal Services