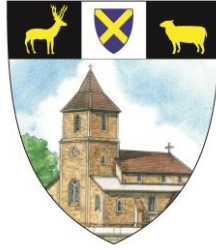


Sandridge Parish Council



Marshalswick Community Centre,
The Ridgeway, St.Albans,
Herts, AL4 9TU

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30th May 2024

TO: Members of the Finance Committee

Councillors John Hale, Graham Leonard, Jenny Roberts, Julie Oakley, James Lambert, Luke Seiger

You are summoned to attend a meeting of Sandridge Parish Council's Finance Committee, to be held at Marshalswick Community Centre on Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 7.30pm

Simon Thwaites
Parish Clerk

To assist in the prompt dispatch of business, members requiring further information or clarification on items included on the agenda are requested to enquire prior to the meeting.

A G E N D A

- 1. To elect a Chair**
Members to vote on a Committee Chair. Please note, the Chair of this committee also sits on the HR Committee which normally meets once a year.
- 2. To elect a Vice Chair**
Members to vote on a Committee Vice Chair.
- 3. To receive and accept apologies for absence**
- 4. Disclosures of interest and dispensations**
 - a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
 - b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests; and
 - c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate
- 5. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th February 2024**
- 6. Terms of Reference.**
To review the Terms of Reference for this committee (copy attached).

7. 2023/24 Budgetary Control (outturn)

Attached is a budgetary control report showing outturn for 2023/24 (Appendix 1). Material variations are explained in the right-hand column. Final net expenditure is £292,437 against an approved budget of £343,095. This gives a reduction on budgeted net expenditure of £50,658. Material variations in summary are;

- Additional Centres Cleaning Expenditure £3,468
- Reduced Community Centres Heating Costs (£3,199)
- Reduced Tree/Hedge Maintenance (£5,491)
- Reduced Grounds Maintenance (£3,712)
- Cancelled Summer Event (£7,119)
- Additional Interest Received (£7,528)
- Additional Grant Income (£3,000)
- Increased Centres Income (£13,238)

8. Reserves

To note and approve the attached table of earmarked and general reserves at year end (Appendix 2).

9. Internal audit 2023/24

Attached is the 2023/24 year-end audit report and accompanying papers completed by Internal Audit Services (IAS Ltd). These consist of;

- The Internal Audit Analysis
- The Auditor's observations and the Clerk's responses
- The Auditor's covering letter

Also attached is the signed Internal Audit report (part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) in which no items have been raised as requiring The Council's attention.

Within the schedule of observations is item J1 in which record three uncorrected errors between Sage and the Financial Statements (mis-postings). Dependent on the Clerk's ability to raise these with the accountant prior to June 12th, there may or may not need to be a reconciliation between the figures presented to this committee and those presented to Full Council.

For information, the item already raised by the auditor and corrected is a mileage claim of £5.40 posted incorrectly to Staff Costs and not to Other Expenses.

To give some context, it's likely that the Financial Statements have never agreed precisely with the Sage system and, while that's not acceptable it's also likely to be true. Variations will not however have been material.

It is;

Recommended

That, subject to the above, this committee formally notes the audit report, recommending that Full Council does the same at its meeting on June 12th 2024.

10. 2023/24 Final Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

A set of Supporting Statements compiled by George Street Accountants, together with a copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2024 are enclosed. Also enclosed is a table of variations of outturn between 2022/23 and 2023/24 as required by the external auditor. It is;

Proposed

That members of this committee recommend to Full Council on June 12th that Council acknowledges responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of internal control, including the

preparation of the Statement of Accounts, and to confirm that to the best of its knowledge and belief, with respect to the Council's Statement of Accounts for year ended 31st March 2024, the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement should be approved and that the Chair and the Parish Clerk (as RFO) should sign Section 1 of the AGAR. It is further;

Proposed

That, subject to item 9, members of this committee recommend to Full Council to confirm that to the best of its knowledge, the 2023/24 Accounting Statements contained in the Annual Return, plus the explanation of variances (enclosed) represent the financial position of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2024 and that the Parish Council Chair and the Parish Clerk (RFO) should each sign Section 2 of the AGAR.

11. The Exercise of Public Rights 2023/24

The Exercise of Public Rights, during which members of the parish are able to inspect the annual supporting statements (and Annual Return) and raise any issues of concern with the external auditor will run from the 14th June 2024 to 26th July 2024 in accordance with regulations. Full Council will be asked to formally note and approve this at the June meeting.

12. Asset Register

It is an audit requirement for The Council to review any disposals or acquisitions from/to the asset register at year end. Attached is the Asset Register showing these items. Full Council will be asked to approve the register on 12th June 2024.

13. S.137 expenditure in 2024/25 – to note

Section 137 expenditure is permitted when no other spending power exists (for example S.112 Local Government Act - Power to employ staff). This Parish Council will use S.137 when no other spending power exists because it no longer holds the General Power of Competence. The maximum expenditure allowed under S.137 is calculated by the number of electors multiplied by the Government's published figure for 2024/25, i.e. $9,483 \times \text{£}10.81 = \text{£}102,511$. The Clerk will monitor expenditure to ensure the maximum under section 137 of the Local Government Act is not exceeded. Expenditure of this type is likely to originate from grant applications for activities outside those normally associated with local councils.

14. New Financial Regulations

To note that an updated version of the NALC Model Financial Regulations has been produced. The Clerk will set time aside at the first opportunity to review and report on these to this committee.

15. The Future of Parish Council Community Centres

To note the attached report by Councillor Wells. This will appear on the June Full Council agenda so it would be helpful if this committee could consider the proposal for setting money aside in terms of affordability before Full Council considers the body of the report.

16. Matters of note

- Quarterly bank reconciliations have been signed off as required. It is a requirement of the Financial Regulations that this is noted by the committee.
- 50% of the parish precept was received on 19th April with the balance payable on 27th September 2024.
- County Court proceedings have been taken against a community centre hirer following non payment of fees. Judgement for the Plaintiff was requested on 10th May 2024.
- Exploratory works to the drains in the Parish Office car park are underway and it may be necessary to carry out excavations. Flooding is resulting in some clothes in the clothing banks becoming soiled, threatening the future of the project.

17. Items for inclusion on the next agenda

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday September 23rd 2024 at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre